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The human factor in capacity-building for development

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note by the Secretariat has been prepared on the basis of an outline provided by the members of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration. The Committee adopted the theme of the human factor in capacity-building for development, as the main agenda item for its eighth session (see Economic and Social Council decision 2008/254). The present note has been prepared to establish the understanding that people matter most in development because they are its beneficiaries as well as its architects. This is the crux of the human factor in capacity-building for development. Building institutional and human capacities to enable public servants to sustain development through effective delivery of services to all must be taken seriously. Governments must manage their public services through human resources management regimes that can best attract a fair share of the best talent, motivate personnel, encourage learning new and effective ways of service delivery, and sustain continuous capacity development to keep pace with demands for better, faster and more equitable service delivery. The public service needs to pay particular attention to strengthening technical capacity in the various areas of service delivery, including information and communications technology, finance, accounting and environment management. However, Governments also need to enhance the leadership capacity of public servants, which is necessary for harmonious, equitable and peaceful development.

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Equality and respect for diversity must be a cherished virtue within the public sector. Structures, systems and practices that encourage citizens' engagement in the processes of governance and public administration must be promoted within the public service. The public service needs to be conversant with the application of modern information and communications technology and knowledge management in order to serve people in this information age. Management development institutes, universities and other tertiary institutions need to be strengthened to sustain efforts towards developing the capacity of the current and future public service. Human resources managers in the public sector must possess the requisite competences to be champions, experts and agents of transformation so as to sustain capacity development in the public service.

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I. Introduction

1. Achieving national development objectives and the internationally agreed development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals, requires that countries have the capacity to produce and provide public services in the right quantity and quality and ensure fair, just, affordable and equitable access to them for all. This is the critical function of human resources in the public service in every country. Other capacities required for development cannot be built without the intervention of the human resources to articulate them in capacity-building institutional arrangements, policies, strategies and programmes. Countries need to assess the development challenges that confront them and determine the human resources management regimes as well as the nature, levels and quality of human talent required to meet such challenges. The present note focuses on the human resources in the public service which are critical for countries to achieve development successfully. Emphasis is put on (a) attracting and retaining a fair share of the best talent in the public service, (b) innovations in selection and recruitment that could improve talent in the public service, (c) equality and diversity, (d) pay reforms, (e) leadership and human resources capacity development, (f) e-learning, (g) civic engagement, (h) transparency, accountability and citizen trust in Government, and (i) knowledge management. It must be understood that in developing the capacity of public servants, efforts should also include strengthening the institutions, structures, processes and legal frameworks through which they work.

II. Matching human resources management regimes, critical functions, talent and challenges

2. Public service authorities in different countries must find the human resources management regime most suitable for providing the best support to manage the talent in the public sector for the achievement of the development agenda. Human resources regime here is understood as the complete spectrum of human resources management in terms of its policies, strategies, systems, structures, roles and responsibilities, planning, programmes, implementation and evaluation, including remuneration, motivation and discipline within the values and principles of the public service. Some countries would prefer the "career system" for public servants. Others would prefer the "job system". Between the two there is room for creativity and hybrid systems that suit specific situations, needs and preferences for any country. The guiding principle would be to look at the gamut of the development agenda of the country and assess which human resources regime would enable a country to attract, develop, retain and manage talent to achieve the objectives of the agenda. For some jobs, time-bound contracts may be offered to the most qualified individuals with sufficient incentives to motivate them to maximize performance. For others, career appointments with appropriate brands of performance assessment and appraisals, together with incentive schemes to sustain motivation, may be more suitable. Career regimes for all jobs in the public service may not be the best mechanism to attract and motivate a fair share of the best talent in the public service.

3. Different countries are faced with different challenges. However, in a general way, many of the challenges are related to issues of globalization, rapid

technological changes, unprecedented demand for democratization, decentralization, transparency and accountability, conflict and crisis. In order to develop the requisite human resources in the public sector to address the current and future challenges posed by the imperatives of development, countries must be clear on which human resources in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, networks and technological know-how they need and the management regimes through which such human resources can be managed. What talent and which public sector human resources management regime is most appropriate depends on the country and situation being considered. Generally, the talent needed may include:

(a) Capable and committed public service leadership at all levels that has a vision and that can inspire the public service and the population and adapt to any situation;

(b) Knowledgeable, skilled and committed policy advisers to provide policy and strategy, creatively develop the long-term goals of society and nations, and forecast and anticipate future trends and rapidly changing global and local conditions;

(c) Human resources management professionals to execute the human resources management function, including forecasting, planning, personnel records, human resources data and information processing, and human resources development, including training and succession planning;

(d) Knowledgeable, skilled and ethical financial and other resource managers to manage public service with responsiveness, transparency, accountability, ethics and integrity;

(e) Knowledgeable and skilled knowledge and information managers to provide systems, processes and practices of information management that can make available timely, accurate, well-organized and accessible information for effective forecasting, planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the public service;

(f) Public servants who cherish professionalism, the values and virtues of service and the general interest;

(g) Public servants who are knowledgeable, skilled and committed in executing functions related to ensuring law and order, justice, audit and administrative control.

However, the public service as an institution must adopt positive values, codes of conduct and a professional ethos to guide the behaviour of public servants. Human resources management professionals must be supported by systems and practices that sustain human resources development strategies and the development of the public service as a learning organization.

A. Attracting and retaining a fair share of the best talent in the public service: a strategic perspective

4. Attracting and retaining a fair share of the best talent in the public service is a strategic matter requiring, first, an analysis of the internal and external environment of the public service to determine the current and future supply and demand of talent in light of the development challenges facing public service. A number of questions need to be addressed:

(a) What talent does the current and future public service need given the country's development priorities and global development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals?

(b) Does such talent exist in the environment?

(c) What are the policies and strategies that can be adopted to provide the talent that will be needed by the current and future public service?

(d) Who are the competitors for the same talent?

(e) What strategies should the public service adopt to beat the competition and attract and retain a fair share of the best talent?

(f) Is the public service equipped with competences in strategic human resources management to serve as strategic advisers, internal consultants and champions to the public service on matters of reform, especially as related to human resources?

5. While attracting and retaining the best talent in the public service remains a critical strategic issue, the current situation in many developing countries presents human resources management dilemmas[1] and challenges including:

(a) Global competition for talent which contributes to brain drain;

(b) Human resources management demand-side policies that often go contrary to the real needs, for example:

(i) Blanket hiring freezes at a time when the national, regional and global development objectives would require more human capacity even in terms of numbers;

(ii) Retrenchment programmes that often result in the loss of the most able personnel;

(iii) Wage erosion and compression;

(iv) Reliance on politicization rather than on merit in, inter alia, recruitment and promotions;

(c) Human resources supply-side policies that do not fit the development requirement, for example:

(i) Low priority to and poor and declining funding of higher/tertiary education;

(ii) Gender discriminatory practices restricting women's access to education;

(iii) Inadequate attention paid to, inter alia, other knowledge management institutions;

(d) Donor policies and practices on development and governance which strain national internal human capacities, for example, emphasis on a development-governance improvement agenda that is highly demanding of human resources but is

[1] See Dele Olowu, "African State capacity and public service modernization: resolving human resource management dilemmas" (presentation made during the thirtieth Round-table Conference of the African Association for Public Administration and Management, held in Accra in October 2008).

not supported by systemic human resources improvements that would enable countries' systems to become strong;

(e) Constrained resources for developing the institutional and human capacities in the public sector.

6. To address such dilemmas, there is a need:

(a) To accord strategic importance to human resources management in the public sector;

(b) To find innovative ways of increasing the talent pool;

(c) To beat the competition for talent from, inter alia, the private and civil society sectors, and international organizations;

(d) To block headhunters from taking the best performers from the public service;

(e) To repair the eroded image of the public service so as to make it attractive to the best talent;

(f) To make public service jobs more challenging and satisfying;

(g) To increase the knowledge and skills of current employees in the public service;

(h) To withstand political pressure so as to recruit the best candidate on the basis of merit;

(i) To overcome budget constraints in order to provide attractive remuneration in the public service;

(j) To develop flexible contracting-out and outsourcing practices in those skills demanding areas of the public service where most difficulties are faced. This implies the development of reliable and lasting partnerships between the public bodies and non-Government service providers, including non-profit and commercial entities.

B. Selection and recruitment innovations in the public service

7. As countries grapple with the dilemmas and challenges of availing themselves of the most capable human resources in the public service to improve the management of governance systems and delivery of services, selection and recruitment processes become critical steps for maintaining a high-quality workforce on which all other human resources strategies will depend. Public service institutions in many countries are challenged to examine their selection and recruitment systems and practices to make the necessary innovations that can enable them to attract a fair share of the best talent and become competitive in the labour market. Some of the innovations/changes applied in this respect include:

(a) Readjusting the legal framework governing recruitment to allow flexibility with respect to hiring so as to enable Government agencies to implement recruiting practices more akin to those used in the private sector;

(b) Using competency-based testing and assessment centres;

(c) Offering sign-on recruitment and retention bonuses, especially for highly skilled professional and technical positions for which there are shortages of skilled personnel;

(d) Increasing recruitment speed through decentralized hiring, online continuous application, shorter application periods, using the Internet and other electronic technologies, and communicating directly with organizations that are good sources of potential applicants;

(e) Addressing imbalances in the diversity of the workforce.

8. Problems of selection and recruitment are, however, more acute in developing countries where the talent needed in the public service may not be abundant. While in such countries high unemployment makes applications for unskilled positions abundant, the search for high and middle-level policy, strategic, professional and technical positions on which effective management of the development and service delivery process depends is a daunting one.

9. There are strategic issues, especially in developed countries, which are related to retirements and an ageing workforce. Normally the ageing of the public service raises challenges with regard to knowledge transfer and operational continuity; but it also creates an opportunity to bring in replacements that fit current and future public service requirements. However, for some developed countries, identifying and attracting new employees to counter labour shortages resulting from forecasted demographic shifts represents a new challenge. The public service in such countries will have to deal with issues of ageing workers, increasing retirements, higher demands on services and the changing needs and motivations of older workers. One way will be to remove barriers for those who are willing and able to work beyond the legal retirement age. Either way, there will be great need to make readjustments in the traditional human resources management regimes of the public service to accommodate such measures. A number of Governments in developed countries have already adopted measures in this regard. Even provincial governments, such as the Queensland (Australia) government, Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, have instituted flexible retirement, where employees are allowed and enabled to reduce their work hours and job responsibilities to gradually ease into fuller retirement at a later date. Such measures include part-time arrangements and rehiring retirees as consultants.[2]

10. However, removing restrictive rules and processes will not solve all the problems in the public service recruitment and selection systems. First, the principles that provide crucial protection for employees in the public service from arbitrary and discriminatory treatment, and protection to the public to minimize patronage, promote fairness and create a professional and stable workforce have to be maintained. Secondly, recruitment and selection and all aspects of the human resources management regime in the public service must be tailored to accomplish the mission of the public service. Recruitment and selection should be a flexible and streamlined process that meets current and future needs while at the same time being an open process that promotes fairness to employees and applicants, and is based on merit. The public service will have to reshape recruitment and selection strategies from a

[2] See Queensland government, Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, "Managing an ageing workforce" in *Maturity Matters* at www.opsc.qld.gov.au/library/docs/resources/publications/retention/ageing).

"one size fits all" regimented process to one that is a hybrid of position-specific and career-specific, offering speed and flexibility while maintaining the principle of merit. Holding hiring authorities accountable for the application of good practice rather than control through inflexible rules can best accomplish this goal.

C. Promoting equality and valuing diversity

11. As the human resources management regimes change and innovate to meet the challenges posed by the need to develop, there must be commitment to improve the delivery of public service for all. Policies and practices of the public service must reflect the needs and experiences of all the people it serves. For this, promoting and valuing diversity is central in innovations needed to mould the society of the future with a workforce composed of the brightest, most talented rainbow of all people. Some countries have made strides in this direction. Cases include the civil service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with its 10-Point Plan launched in 2005 that aims at mainstreaming equality and diversity in all aspects of the work of the civil service.

> "Through understanding the diversity of society, by better reflecting the aspirations, experiences and needs of the people we serve and by respecting and valuing differences, we can provide the policies and services that people want from us. To do this effectively, we need a workforce with the very best possible mix of existing and future talent".[3]

D. Pay reform as capacity-building

12. The ability of the public service to attract, retain, adequately motivate its personnel and build the requisite human resources capabilities is one of the prerequisites to improved service delivery. It is possible to associate the problems linked with poor performance, lack of professionalism and corruption in the public service to low compensation levels and ineffective pay administration. Professor Gelase Mutahaba, referring to the Tanzanian situation, asserts that

> "the consequences of the decline in real pay and weakening of the incentive regime have been disastrous. It has led to depletion of scarce motivational capital in the public service giving rise to: demotivation of civil servants at all levels; reduced work efforts, declining levels in performance; weakening of accountability and control mechanisms; diminished ability to recruit and retain qualified managerial, professional and technical personnel; and reduced commitment to the public service. In addition to the reduced work effort, low and declining pay may reduce goodwill, increase ill will and motivation to engage in counterproductive behaviour not supporting increased production, service delivery, good fiscal management and tolerance for 'deviant behaviour', including time theft and corruption".[4]

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[3] See *Promoting Equality, Valuing Diversity — A Strategy for the Civil Service* at www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/diversity/index.asp.

[4] See Gelase Mutahaba, "Pay reform and corruption in Tanzania's public service" (paper presented during the seminar on potential for public service pay reform to eradicate corruption among civil servants in Tanzania, held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania on 26 May 2005).

Comprehensive pay reform is a critical element in building the human capacity of the public service. Many developing countries are grappling with balancing the need to reduce the overall public service wage bill with the necessity to improve remuneration so as to attract, motivate and retain skilled staff in the public service.

13. The main objectives of pay reform should include:

(a) Establishing a pay regime that provides for fair and transparent job and pay equity;

(b) Developing a pay structure that can attract and retain individuals with the requisite skills and competences needed in the public service;

(c) Ensuring coherence of compensation management;

(d) Clarifying to all public servants the basis for pay differentials from one institution or service to another;

(e) Strengthening effective pay administration to provide standards, consistency, transparency and accountability throughout the public service.

14. However, pay reform cannot be planned and implemented uniformly in all countries because there are many contextual elements to consider in determining levels and structure of pay. Moreover, pay reform works within two sets of objectives that may be contradictory. For the public service, pay seeks (a) to attract the right employees, motivate them to continue to perform, develop their skills and abilities, and (b) to align satisfactorily Government revenue with productivity and efficiency of the public servants, while reflecting to the employer the importance of the jobs or tasks performed. For the public servant, pay must satisfy basic material needs, provide an incentive to work, develop skills and satisfy basic status needs, and ensure work equity. Pay regimes should be determined at the meeting point between these two sets of expectations. That is why pay systems must take into consideration the historical and economic context in which pay has developed in the particular country, readiness for change and acceptability by key stakeholders.

III. Leadership and human resources capacity development

15. One of the most critical elements of the human capacity in the public service is leadership because it is the engine that inspires and gives direction in the delivery of public services. Public service leaders:

(a) Create an environment for reform and capacity-building, organizational conditions for empowering staff;

(b) Influence service delivery systems;

(c) Identify and grasp opportunities for collaboration in the delivery of services;

(d) Find ways of providing choice and harnessing the energies of all users of their service;

(e) Work to ensure cooperation between leaders across sectors;

(f) Ensure effective, efficient and frugal use and control of human, material and financial resources, including appropriate and well-organized data and information for the delivery of the services;

(g) Establish and operate institutional arrangements to motivate the human resources to adapt and perform in changing external and internal conditions.

16. Leadership permeates the public service from the political level to the smallest supervisory unit and work teams. Leaders with the foregoing qualities should emerge and be developed in the public service, civil society, the private sector and grass-roots community organizations. Leadership is needed to ensure that no segment of the population or area of a country is left behind and the national development objectives and international development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals, are attained in an equitable and inclusive manner. The development of the human resources depends on the inspiration and resolve of leadership to strengthen the public service and on the predisposition of leaders to acknowledge and treat public servants as the most critical resource in the development process. Many countries have embarked on leadership capacity development as a critical component of their public service reform programmes.

17. Developing leadership capacity in the public service should target current and future leaders, including political leadership, such as parliamentarians and ministers, and subnational-level political leaders, such as local government councils, executives and senior public servants. For developing the capacities of future leaders, programmes need to focus on training civil servants at entry and mid-career-levels. They also need to start in universities and other tertiary institutions which are the catchment areas for recruiting public servants. However, in the current era where public administration has moved more towards the wider concept of governance, leaders in all these sectors need to interact with each other to create a common vision for their development and promote a mutual understanding of their respective strengths and weaknesses. Groups such as women and people with disabilities, as well as minority and disadvantaged groups need to be targeted by leadership capacity development programmes to enable them to participate in policymaking, management and leadership so as to address challenges and harness development opportunities. Moreover, leadership capacity-building should not neglect the symbiotic relationships between leadership development and institution-building, where leaders contribute substantially to building institutions and institutions play a role in shaping leadership behaviour.

A. Challenges facing leadership in the public service

18. Developing the capacity of leaders in the public service needs to be undertaken in light of the current and future challenges the leaders have to address. Given the imperatives of achieving national development objectives and the internationally agreed development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals, and alignment of the demands of globalization with local development visions and strategies, some of the challenges that public service leaders have to address include:

(a) Understanding and harnessing the forces of globalization;

(b) Formulating and implementing strategies for poverty eradication;

(c) Designing and implementing conflict prevention and resolution strategies, including building requisite capacities for conflict management, especially in the context of managing diversity in the public service;

(d) Building legitimate and capable State institutions to enhance the legitimacy of the State;

(e) Leading national public services within a world of increasing interdependency;

(f) Conceiving and propelling large-scale socio-economic transformation to cope with the development demands and pace of modern and changing societies;

(g) Developing sustainable leadership capacity, especially through effective and planned succession in the public service;

(h) Managing and mitigating impacts of emergencies, crises and disasters, including climate change, acute food shortages, financial crises and market upheavals, tsunamis and earthquakes.

To summarize the foregoing, modern leadership needs to embrace mastery over change management and the handling of emergencies or crises.

B. Leadership capacity required in the public service

19. Given the foregoing challenges and others, there is a need to clearly identify the leadership capacities that are required to address them in a sustainable manner. This calls for leadership capacity assessment before designing any leadership capacity development programmes and activities. However, it is commonly believed that too few interventions in this domain are formulated based on a thorough and systematic needs assessment. Likewise, not enough is done in terms of systematic monitoring and evaluation of the results achieved with capacity development programmes because they are not preceded by capacity assessment to provide benchmarks against which monitoring and evaluation of impact could be carried out.[5] Each situation gives rise to leadership capacity needs generated by the social, political and economic challenges. However, in a general way and in light of the challenges identified above, the public service needs integrative, entrepreneurial, administrative, adaptive and technical leadership capacities. It also needs to abide by institutional codes and principles to ensure that it is inspired to serve with diligence and dedication now and in the future. Counting on behavioural leadership without supporting institutional provisions in terms of laws, rules, regulations and codes of conduct to govern and regulate the behaviour is risky because leaders can always be tempted to abuse their discretion and power.

20. Integrative ability is required for identifying and ironing out conflicts owing to diverging interests, competition for resources, cultural and religious differences, and diverging values and outlooks as well as concerns of minority groups. In the context of globalization, integrative ability is required to:

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[5] See George Matovu, "From policy to implementation: issues related to developing requisite capacity for effectively implementing decentralization policies in Africa" (presentation made during the Ministerial Conference on Leadership Capacity Development for Decentralized Governance and Poverty Reduction in Africa, held in Yaoundé from 28 to 30 May 2008).

(a) Lead each country to redefine and integrate itself into the global village but without losing its identity;

(b) Tap all abilities from within and outside the public service and inspire every public servant to work towards the agreed development goals;

(c) Seek out and pursue the national interests;

(d) Distribute development activities equally across the country;

(e) Ensure that the development agenda is achieved for the benefit of all citizens;

(f) Ensure that intergenerational equity is guaranteed by paying attention to the way resources are utilized currently so that the generations of tomorrow do not suffer from the consequences of the poor resource planning and utilization of today.

21. Entrepreneurial ability is required for envisioning and strategizing, including analysis of the past, current and future environment and situation, in order to map out paths as well as viable and feasible policy and strategy alternatives for development.

22. Administrative ability is necessary for following and respecting laws, rules, regulations, procedures, due process and prudent utilization of scarce resources to avoid unlimited use of discretion in bureaucracies, chaotic political competition, corruption, lack of accountability and a situation of "survival of the fittest" which leaves many individuals in society vulnerable to all sorts of selfish forces and eventually to violence.

23. Adaptive ability is necessary to ensure effective adaptation to new changes, challenges and demands, especially emanating from the forces of globalization. Technical ability is needed for understanding complex issues and action. Whether it concerns provision of health services, education, water, roads, electricity or agricultural extension services, the public service must avail itself of technically competent leaders to lead the implementation of the development agenda. The meeting point between management and leadership is the action. In every manager there should be sufficient doses of leadership to foresee, create, inspire, adapt to changes and ensure orderly development. Likewise, every leader must have the management capacity to plan, prioritize, steer implementation, monitor and control, evaluate and recast plans.

C. Leadership succession as knowledge management

24. In the literature of leadership capacity development there is much reference to succession planning as a necessary measure for sustainability. However, this is always in reference to personnel. But there is a side of succession planning which concerns organization, conservation and the transmission of knowledge to incoming generations of leaders. Many organizations tend to overlook this critical aspect of knowledge management and let managers depart without leaving behind all the knowledge they accumulated during their years of service. This is a big loss. There are, however, cases where leaders are encouraged to write their memoirs, leaving behind hard copies containing the invaluable knowledge they accumulated. But this occurs in a minority of countries and is in most cases limited to the top political leadership. Yet it is known that leaders at all levels of the public service accumulate

knowledge which should not be allowed to leave or die with them. The question concerns how to utilize modern information and communications technology to tap this knowledge and ensure sustainable knowledge succession.

D. Approaches and methodologies for leadership capacity development

25. Given the diversity of political-administrative cultures and the great variety of societal environments, the leadership of each country has to be open-minded and look at all of the potential solutions to their own problems. The basic guideline for leadership capacity development is that each situation and the needs of the targeted audience should dictate the approaches, techniques, thematic content and training methods to be adopted. In designing, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of leadership development programmes in the immediate, short-, medium- or long-term, organizers should adopt a participatory approach involving the beneficiaries and target groups of such programmes to make them congruent with the needs. Leadership capacity development in the public service can be achieved in many ways depending on the target group, including training, coaching, mentoring, technical advice, study tours, peer-to-peer learning exchanges, high-level consultations, workshops and action-learning.

26. In order for the foregoing approaches and methods to be applied, two capacity development actions need to be taken in the public service. First, human resources managers must be recognized as the most strategic partners in strengthening leadership capacity in the public service because they have the function of identifying the needs and planning the capacity development. In some countries, especially most African countries, in implementing public service reforms, human resources managers and their undeveloped professional status are neglected and relegated to non-core and non-strategic functions when they are supposed to be the top advisers and leaders of public service reform and leadership capacity development programmes. This situation needs to be reversed by repositioning the function of human resources management as a strategic function and by creating competent professional human resources managers in the public service. Secondly, public administration institutes, management development institutes and relevant university faculties must be given equal if not more attention in strengthening public service capacities.

IV. People matter: civic engagement, transparency, accountability and citizen trust in Government

27. There are always two sides in the delivery of public goods and services: the public servants who produce and deliver them and the people who consume them. It is true that public servants need to have adequate capacities and competences to produce and deliver services to the people. However, another enabling factor needed in the process is the trust people have in Government. In this note trust in Government is understood to refer to the faith which a citizen or a development player/actor/stakeholder puts in Government as a whole or in its agents (elected officials, civil servants, including local government officials and public enterprise managers) to act on his or her behalf, make fair decisions and provide services in a predictable and equitable manner. Trust in Government must be regarded as internal

trust among the various institutions and employees of Government and as external trust between the Government and the people it serves. But trust also needs to be perceived in terms of the trust the international community — whether bilateral, multilateral, international or civil society organizations or private sector multinational corporations — has in the Government in question. All these perspectives of trust are critical in the performance and legitimacy of public sector institutions.

28. The role of the human resources is critical in trust. Public servants have a strong influence on the way people trust Government, because they provide services and constantly communicate and are in contact with the citizen/service users. Therefore the human resources in the public service need to act transparently and with accountability to meet the demands of the public. But the other side of the coin is that the people themselves need to be engaged and to participate in the governance and public administration process to complete the cycle of transparency and accountability. Engagement is regarded as an important governance norm that can strengthen and democratize the decision-making process of public servants and produce outcomes that favour the poor and the disadvantaged. The engagement of individuals in the process of governance and public administration therefore increases the opportunity for people to trust Government.

29. What determines trust in Government are the technical and professional capacities, professionalism, ethics, integrity, transparency, accountability, effectiveness and responsiveness of public servants in conducting public affairs, including the delivery of goods and services to the people. Appropriate institutional frameworks have to be in place and effective to constantly shape the behaviour of the public servants and leaders so as to ensure that they behave and act in a way that meets people's expectations. Traditional ones, including public service standing orders, codes of conduct and leadership codes, which are focused more on the behaviour of the public servant especially in terms of respect of rules, procedures, norms, values and etiquette, are used in public service regimes of many countries. But outward-looking ones which focus on satisfaction of the expectations of the people in terms of quality, quantity and promptness of the services delivered have been adopted in countries such as Kenya, the United Kingdom and Australia to enhance trust in Government. These two complement one another to enhance the trust. The institutional measures which target improvement of quality, quantity and promptness of the public goods and services delivered call for putting the engagement of the citizen at the centre of the process and outcome of the delivery of public services and dictate approaches and methods of participatory and engaged governance and public administration. In this way civic engagement in public governance becomes critical in transparency, accountability and effectiveness in the delivery of public services as well as in enhancing trust in Government. When it is stated that people matter in the development of public service capacity, the whole issue is not only about the capacity of public servants but also and probably more so about the people they serve.

A. Civic engagement in public service

30. Civic engagement and participation play important roles in transparency, accountability and strengthening trust in Government. There are emerging practices such as "people budgeting" and "social auditing" with promise for shaping policy.

There are principles and enablers vital to successful operations in civic engagement and capacity-building to this end. But there are also challenges that hobble civic engagement processes which need to be addressed. One of the challenges in mainstreaming engaged and participatory governance in the public service, even in countries where there is already commitment to practice it, is that it contains a triple challenge to capacity-building. First, the public servants, including senior political and technical leaders, must develop the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to operate within an environment where engagement and participation of the citizens in public service is the norm. Most public servants have been trained to operate bureaucratic hierarchical systems and have got not only to unlearn this but also to learn new ways of engaged and participatory administration. Secondly, the citizens themselves, accustomed to being passive recipients, have got to learn how to engage with public servants to demand transparency, accountability and effectiveness in the delivery of goods and services in the public services. Lastly, institutions, systems, structures, processes and procedures of the public service often are not designed to support engaged and participatory delivery of goods and services. Thus, they have to be reviewed and readjusted to service this purpose. In other words, engaged and participatory governance and public administration calls for an overhaul of the traditional public service both in its structure and human behaviour. Even at constitutional levels where the relationship between the governors and the governed is defined, it is necessary to review how the highest law of a particular country provides or implicitly makes provision for participation and engagement in the delivery of public services.

31. For a start, it is important to look at various cases that highlight key areas to be addressed in mainstreaming civic engagement and participation and to exchange experiences, promote horizontal cooperation and discuss lessons learned among Governments, practitioners, the media, academic institutions, donor agencies and civil society as a whole so as to create basic frameworks for redesigning the public service and its human capacities in order to promote engaged and participatory governance. Follow-up actions can be framed along the lines of identifying key principles behind current successful experiences, developing advocacy initiatives to create commitments to promote civic engagement and identifying suitable tools, methodologies and indicators to monitor and evaluate the processes of civic engagement.

32. The foregoing suggestions can become building blocks for framing an international, regional, national and local architecture for civic engagement through the creation of a pro-engagement and pro-poor leadership forum for exchanging ideas to understand the motivations, approaches and risks faced in civic engagement and to create a pro-engagement leadership and public service model for those who are interested. The countries that have endorsed international conventions and declarations that include commitment to pro-poor development, social justice, gender equity, environmental sustainability, human rights and citizens' rights may now wish to extend these commitments to designing public service structures, systems, procedures, practices and public service regimes as well as leadership and institutional capacities for civic engagement and participation in the delivery of public services. The public service needs to change in terms of the way it engages the people and how it masters information and communications technology to support and facilitate effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, networking, knowledge management and sustainable improvement in the delivery of the public service.

B. Serving in the information age

33. The centrality of data and information to the improvement of public sector performance depends on the speed with which information and services move between two points. Serving in the information age, public service organizations need to develop viable networks of information infrastructure to facilitate effective communication, dissemination and processing of information, an educated and skilled population to effectively create, share and utilize knowledge well and an economic and institutional regime to provide incentives for the efficient use of existing and new knowledge. This shift requires a deep change in bureaucracy, transforming Government into an interconnected, modernized organism that is able to develop with the changing world and changing technologies.

34. Government organizations are inherently knowledge-based organizations where effective utilization of knowledge resources — knowledge management — enables Governments to formulate policies with increased transparency and trust. Better knowledge management practices contribute to effective public services by maximizing productivity in terms of process, time and cost.

35. Public sector organizations are looking to become learning organizations with the objective of exploring how to create a dynamic culture that would be conducive for countries to leapfrog over stages of development and to reap more rapidly the benefits of a nascent information economy. This process of transformation of the public sector is leading to a change in the organization of public administrations which is interoperable, simple, transparent, dynamic, driven by users and equipped for continuous change.

36. Knowledge management is increasingly becoming an integral part of overall e-Government development efforts. The major challenge facing knowledge management implementation in many countries around the world is not a technological one; rather it concerns the requirement for the development of a common culture of modernization of public administration, especially as it relates to human resources capacity-building.

37. There is a vital link between the successful delivery of public services, information and communications technology (ICT) and the management of human resources. While ICT can engender efficient use of resources, improvements in efficiency in the public sector demand shifts and improvements of human competences in the public sector. The integration of ICT for capacity-building in the public sector is crucial to the ability of the public sector to respond to development challenges. The incorporation of ICT into public sector human resources management strategies is seen to improve the managerial, technical and professional skills of public employees. In many cases technology-based services, including distance education, electronic personal identification systems and Internet-based services, may prove to be the only way in which Governments are able to meet their own service delivery targets. It is increasingly being recognized that the partnership between human skills and technology can further the content, extend the reach and increase the effectiveness of public sector programmes.

38. Effective integration of ICT into human resources management encompasses:

(a) Setting up a holistic framework for human resources management which embodies ICT as its central lynchpin;

(b) Re-engineering decision-making processes, the use of technology and the design of tasks and working practices in the Government towards a new partnership between people and technology aimed at efficiency and transparency in the management, operation and monitoring of public sector programmes;

(c) Incorporating ICT in human capacity-building to make people and technology deliver more using the same or fewer resources.

In summary, Governments have a responsibility to fully exploit the potential of ICT in the public sector. While putting in place the enabling environment with the establishment and reform of institutions, regulations and structures, it is important to incorporate the principle of the centrality of ICT into governance strategies, mechanisms and processes. Governments also need to recognize the importance of building human capacities in terms of necessary knowledge and skills to promote innovative and efficient public service delivery. In order to achieve this, it is important to foster an attitude and mindset that is receptive to ICT-based public administration and ICT-based delivery of services.

C. The e-learning platform for human capacity-building

39. The use of ICT and capacity for learning is necessary for a modern workforce in the public sector. Today's public managers need capacity-building in a variety of skills. Governments the world over are recognizing the power of new technologies for imparting such capacity-building and training in the public sector. ICT, including global technological networks such as the Internet, are increasingly being employed to provide access to learning and knowledge infrastructure, thus revolutionizing the traditional learning systems. One conduit for ICT-based human capacity-building in the public sector is e-learning (or online learning), which can be defined as the use of ICT to acquire information, knowledge and skills. For the public sector, e-learning means employing information technology to access, gather, analyse and utilize information and knowledge to improve organizational performance and public service delivery.

40. ICT can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector departments and organizations through the strategic application of technologies and ICT-enabled skill development. ICT can deliver skill training and capacity-building programmes specifically targeted to civil servants and decision makers using appropriate technologies. Such e-learning is self-paced — public officials are not bound by the confines of time and place — and can be accessible at their convenience, with training material available online to download for later reading. Because it is self-paced and self-directed, it provides the flexibility to choose content and tools appropriate to differing interests, needs and skill levels. Furthermore, e-learning accommodates multiple learning styles with a variety of delivery methods geared to different learners. The application of ICT in training in the public sector can:

(a) Broaden availability of quality knowledge resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for learning and decision-making;

(b) Deliver skill training and capacity-building programmes specifically targeted to civil servants and decision makers, using appropriate technologies;

(c) Increase information, specialist support and remote diagnosis capability for effective project management;

(d) Allow for greater transparency and monitoring of project management decisions;

(e) Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector departments and organizations through the strategic application of technologies and ICT-enabled skill development;

(f) Facilitate knowledge, horizontal and vertical exchange and networking among departments;

(g) Enhance the ability of developing countries to participate in and learn from best practices in public administration around the world.

41. Together with the availability of training resources on a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week basis, the use of ICT for human capacity-building can provide specialist support and remote diagnosis capability for effective project management. Online learning can also open up a vista of global and regional development, best practices and a vast multitude of knowledge which resides in the virtual arena. Use of e-learning as a tool for public sector human resources skills development is likely to yield cost savings owing to the elimination of traditional training materials in the long run, provide in-time access to timely information, promote better retention content through personalized learning and lead to faster collaboration among public sector networks. It can also remove barriers to learning and participation in learning, upgrade the skills of the public sector workforce and ensure that every learner realizes his or her full potential. Employing e-learning for human capacity-building can contribute to an improvement in the efficiency of the workforce and better delivery of services. In doing so, public servants can become more creative in developing innovative ways of deploying resources and improving the quality of public service delivery.

42. All of the foregoing benefits of e-learning notwithstanding, there is a strong and urgent need to support the development of enabling ICT infrastructures and networks that are appropriate for each context. It is unfortunate that the poorest countries and areas in the world that most urgently need help in achieving the Millennium Development Goals are disadvantaged by the technological divide and have less opportunity to benefit from e-learning.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

43. It is important to recognize that public service traditions vary around the world, depending upon historical tradition and the system of law that has come to prevail, and upon the levels of literacy and development. Human resources management regimes and the competences in the public service must always be matched with the challenges that are facing or will face the public service. The public service must take the attraction and retention of a fair share of the best talent as strategic for improvements in the delivery of public services. Capacity-building in the public service needs to take into account personnel leadership, institutions, structures, systems, procedures and processes. Capable civil servants cannot produce at their optimum capacity while working within inappropriate institutions, structures and systems. The human factor in capacity-building for development goes beyond public servants to include the capacity of the citizen or consumers of services to participate and engage in the process of governance and public

administration so as to demand better services, transparency and accountability. However, the citizen must also be capable of harnessing some of the tools, such as ICT, used to deliver services.

44. The following recommendations are made to Member States:

(a) **Member States need to strengthen the institutional and human capacities of their public services to enable them to provide more and better services to meet the national development objectives and the internationally agreed development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals;**

(b) **Given that the application of ICT holds potential for increasing and improving the delivery of public services, Member States need to anchor the building of the capacities of their public services on the application of appropriate ICT to improve service delivery and knowledge management;**

(c) **Member States need to strengthen the capacities of management development institutes and universities so that they sustain capacity-building in the public service for the current and future generations;**

(d) **Member States need to pay particular attention to the development of the capacities of human resources managers in the public service to ensure a competent cadre of public servants who can provide professional advice to Government on the direction and capacities of public servants that are needed currently and in the future;**

(e) **Member States need to review their governance and public administration institutional arrangements, structures, systems and practices of the public service, and make them conducive to civic engagement, transparency and accountability as key components of a relationship of trust that is crucial to face the challenges of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.**

45. The following recommendations are made to the Secretariat:

(a) **In its technical cooperation and advisory services, the Secretariat needs to enhance emphasis placed on capacity-building for effective human resources management and development, including the application of ICT in the delivery of services and knowledge management;**

(b) **The Secretariat should increase the provision of online training using the United Nations Public Administration Network, which is a cheaper and more effective way of contributing to the enhancement of human resources capacities in various fields;**

(c) **The United Nations should recognize and promote some regional centres of excellence that can offer medium to long-term training and promote cooperation among Governments of the region. Such activities can help not only to build hard technical skills and human capacities, but also to promote friendship across the public services;**

(d) **Through research, analysis and advisory services, the Secretariat should support deepening of understanding, transfer of knowledge and building of capacities for enhanced civic engagement.**